

THE CHILD AT HOME

OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

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"IT BITETH LIKE A SERPENT, AND STINGETH LIKE AN ADDER."

THIS is what the Bible says of wine: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

Do you wonder how it can be that strong drink will do this? Look at the loathsome, reeling drunkard. He was not what he now is *at first*. Little by little he was led on, till furious appetite planted its deadly fangs in him, and killed both body and soul.

I thought of this when I read, the other day, of a man whose thirst for drink brought him to a terrible death by a serpent's bite.

His name was Gurling, one of the keepers of the

reptiles in the great Zoölogical Gardens of London. One day he went with a friend to a public-house, and drank glass after glass of gin till reason had fled from his poor brain. During the previous year, there had been an exhibition of Egyptian snake-charmers; but the snakes were deprived of their poison-fangs. Gurling, in his frenzy, thought he would do like the snake-charmers, even though the fangs remained.

"A newly-arrived Morocco poison-snake was first taken out of its cage, grasped by its middle, flourished aloft, and thrown like a lasso about his neck. Happily, it was not aroused so as to bite.

"Having replaced this in its cage, Gurling cried, 'Now for the cobra!' The cobra di capello, or hooded snake, is one of the most furious and poi-

sonous serpents in the world. When enraged, they rise on their tail, raise their head, expand their scaly hood, and hiss loudly before the fatal bite.

"The keeper caught the cobra, which was then somewhat torpid from the cold, and put it in his bosom. It then revived, and glided downward round his waist, its head emerging from beneath his waistcoat. The man grasped the cobra by the body about a foot from the head, with one hand drew it out, seized it lower down with the other hand, and was in the act of flourishing it aloft, as he had done the other snake, when, as he held it up in front of his face, the cobra, suddenly expanding its hood, struck him like lightning between the eyes, plunging its poison-fangs into the nose. The man was staggered by the blow. The blood streamed down his face. He called for help; but it was in vain. In one hour he was dead."

Children, the wine-cup may not turn at once, as in this case, into the terrible serpent; but in its effects upon you, remember, "at the last it biteth like a serpent."

Uncle Ed.

For the Child at Home.

"WHAT CAN I DO?"

It is all dark in the room. Lillie has received her good-night kiss from auntie; and, tucked up nicely in her bed, there seems no reason why the little blue eyes should not soon close in sleep.

"But, hark! there are sobs coming from under the quilt drawn over the little curly head, and then the smothered cry, 'What can I do?'"

What is the matter? What troubles the little girl? Let us listen, and perhaps we shall find out. Presently we hear amid the sobs, —

"Oh, dear! It is no use to try. I can't be good. I meant to be this morning. I prayed about it too; and then, the very first thing, I was angry with little Rosa for nothing. Then I was contrary, and would have my own way when auntie tried to please me; and I spoke impatiently to dear grandma. And, besides, I have had so many wicked thoughts and feelings, that I can not even begin to tell them. Oh! I do wish I was a Christian, and then I should always do right. I wonder if I ever shall be one. But there: I might as well go to sleep now, and try again to-morrow."

But no: Lillie can not sleep. Conscience is wide awake, and will not let her. God's Spirit is showing her what a sinner she is.

Presently she sobs out again: "I am afraid I shall die before morning; and *what* will become of me if I do? I wish somebody would tell me how to be good. My Sabbath-school teacher says God loves good children; and I learned out of the Bible, last Sunday, 'God is angry with the wicked every day.' So I know he is angry with me; for I am wicked almost all the time."

Here Lillie's sobs burst out afresh. At length she speaks again: "He struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for telling a lie, and he sent the two bears

to eat up the children who mocked the holy prophet. Oh! I am afraid something *will* happen to me for being so naughty. But then my teacher told me, if I prayed, God would hear me and take care of me: so I will ask him."

And Lillie prays: "O God! *please* keep me alive till to-morrow, and I will be a better girl. Please send a revival here, so that I may be converted like the children I read about, and always be good. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Soon the little girl falls asleep, watched over by the kind care of her heavenly Father. Whether she succeeded any better the next day in being good or not, we will not stop to inquire; for there is something else, dear little readers I want to say to you.

Isn't there among you some other Lillie or Annie or Jeanie who has often felt just so? or some Willie or Charlie or Georgie who has been ready to cry out like Lillie, "What can I do?"

Dear children, Jesus has left a special message for you right in his Holy Word. Haven't you learned long ago this precious verse? — "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There was Lillie trying to carry the heavy burden of her sins, instead of doing as the hymn says, —

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God:
He takes them all, and frees us
From the accursed load."

But you say, perhaps, "I thought that invitation was only given to men and women."

Jesus says ALL: more than that, he says, "Suffer the *little children* to come." So you see every one of you is invited.

It is true, God loves *good* children: but he also loves naughty, wicked ones; loves and pities them so much, that he sent his only Son to die for them. Your mothers love you when you are naughty; but it grieves them to see you so. But, dear children, remember that it grieves the blessed Saviour more than it could grieve any earthly parent. Then what can you do?

Go right to Jesus. Tell him all the naughty things you have done, all the wicked feelings you have had, and how sorry you are about it. Ask him to forgive you, and wash your sins away in his own blood, and he *will* do it; for *he says he will*.

You need not wait for a revival. God's Spirit is in your heart now, and will guide you in the right way if you will listen to his voice. Being converted is only to turn from following Satan, and follow Jesus.

But then it will not always be easy for you to do right if you are a Christian. But

"Oh! do not be discouraged;
For Jesus is your friend:
He will give you grace to conquer,
And keep you to the end."

Q.

For the Child at Home.

COME AND SEE.

James Brooks was fourteen years old. He was a member of a Sunday school, and, within a year, had been the means of bringing a great number of boys into it, as pupils, from a manufacturing settlement not far from his home.

"Strange how successful that boy is in inducing such kind of boys to go to Sabbath school! And he *keeps* them there too, I'm told, even after they've begun to grow unsteady. How is it, Aunt Hannah?"

So inquired a neighbor of the boy's aunt.

"He has a *way* with him," replied Aunt Hannah.

"And he doesn't preach either," added Alfred, James's younger brother. "He only says, 'Come and see.'"

"Well, if that don't beat all!" said the neighbor.

"But," continued Alfred, "he first gets acquainted with the boys: he doesn't bolt right into it the first

thing. And after he's got a knot of them around him, talking about their work or play or something, they begin to kind o' like him; and, before he goes away, he says, 'Now I'd like to be acquainted with you all. Suppose you just meet me next Sunday at the Sabbath school.' And he tells them where he goes."

"I never! And don't they sometimes object?" asked the neighbor.

"Sometimes," replied Alfred, "a fellow will say, 'Oh! Sunday school a'n't a nice place for boys;' and Jemmy only answers, 'Come and see.' Now, Bill Cook says there's something in the way he says it, and the way he looks, that makes a fellow believe right off that Sunday school is a nice place. Anyway, *he* went, and he's been there a year steadily; and there are others, too, that have grown to be first-rate boys, and have left off swearing and lying."

Would you know the secret of James's success? It was, first of all, *love to Christ*. Secondly, he remembered that none but God's Spirit could make a boy willing to accept his invitation: so he always earnestly asks *his* aid before going forth on his errands.

When James first began to love his Bible, he was one day much struck with the instance of two disciples, as soon as they had found Jesus, going immediately to find others to bring to him. Their hearts were full. The first thing they say is, "We have found the Messiah." And when one answers on this wise, "Why! did you find him there?" or, as boys in these days would say, "Can any *nice* thing be found *there*?" he simply answered, "Come and see."

He did not try to convince him, but wished him to go and be convinced himself. So he went, and was convinced.

Do you remember the names of these disciples? If not, perhaps you would like to read the very interesting account related in the first chapter of John's Gospel.

One of them was struck with wonder because Jesus told him something which none but God could know. He asks in astonishment, "Why, how do you know *me*?" And how much greater is his wonder to hear Jesus tell just where he was sitting before his companion called him! — too far off to be seen by mortal eye, which proved to him his omniscience.

I have told you a part, in order to induce you to read the whole for yourself. And, as you read, remember Him who also knoweth *you* altogether, — just where you go, and what you do and say. Ask for grace to love and serve him.

M. P. H.

For the Child at Home.

AUNT CORA'S LETTERS TO THE LITTLE ONES.

No. III.

Dear children, have any of your parents a big Bible with pictures and maps in it to show the different places which are written about in the Bible? Well, dear little Lilly's parents had one; and it was Lilly's greatest ambition and delight, on Sabbath evening, to be allowed to read out of it. It was *so* big, that she could not hold it: but her mother had a small table just the height for it, which she called her Bible-table; and up to this table sat dear little Lilly, every Sunday after tea, to read "*her* chapters," as she called them. She wanted to begin the big Bible, and read it through. So her mother heard her read three chapters every Sabbath evening. Poor little girl! she never read it through. She had only read eighteen chapters when she sickened and died.

It was a sweet Sabbath-evening scene, — that little girl of six years old, bending over the word of God, with her soft, light, curly hair falling over her fair brow. It is a beautiful picture to remember.

Oftentimes she wanted her mother to read to her.

And I will tell you of the last time we read together out of that big Bible. We were all alone in that pleasant parlor, when my little girl said, "Come, mother, won't you *read* to me now?" And so we turned over the leaves of that big Bible to see *what* we should read. Soon we came across a map, with a line drawn out, where a *ship* had sailed; and it was a very crooked line, and went very much out of the way; and my little girl said, "Why, mamma, what made the ship go so crooked?" I told her we would read all about it, and see. So we turned over the leaf, and found it was Paul's tempestuous voyage, when he was sent bound in chains to Rome, and was a prisoner, because he had preached "Christ and him crucified." The vessel was in the midst of a great storm, and driven about by the tempest, so that it could not go any other way than crooked. At last it was wrecked upon a little island called Melita, where the people were very strange, and where Paul, and all the rest of the men with him, were obliged to stay three months, because their ship was destroyed by the storm. But these people were kind to Paul and his companions; for God inclined their hearts to receive them. They kindled a fire for them to get warm and dry after they had been out in this great storm: and, if you read about it in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts, you will see how hard Paul and his companions had to work to save themselves from being drowned; some clinging to boards, and others to broken pieces of the ship, till they reached the land.

I hope you will enjoy reading the whole of the story as much as little Lilly did that evening. But she never listened to any more Bible-stories by her dear mother's side: for the next Sabbath she was lying on a sick-bed, burning and tossing with fever; and, before another Sabbath came, God had taken his little lamb home to the Saviour's fold.



For the Child at Home.

CHARLIE'S LESSON.

The boat lay there on the shore. It was tied by a rope to the boat-house; and Charlie stood and looked and looked at it. It was such a beautiful boat, all green and white, and so gracefully modeled!

Conscience whispered to Charlie, "Come away! Your father told you not to go into it unless he were with you. You prayed, 'Lead us not into temptation,' this morning. Now you are going into it with both eyes open."

But Charlie would not listen to conscience.

"I am only going to sit in it, without even unfastening it," said he to himself. "Father would not object to that, I am sure."

So he stepped in, and took a seat. The tide was high, and the boat floated about a little while; and Charlie dipped his hands into the warm salt water, and wished he could just row a little.

"Only a little here in the cove," he said to himself. "I won't go out into the stream. I'll stay right here."

So, though conscience fairly screamed in his ear, he untied the boat. Conscience was outraged at this, and went to sleep.

If you refuse to listen to her, she will not keep on warning you, boys: she will cease telling you when you are doing wrong.



Charlie could row the least bit in the world; and he kept dipping the oars into the sparkling water, and felt quite grand and strong when the boat moved a little way in return. All at once, he started with surprise and alarm. He was ever so far from the shore. The tide had begun going out, and was carrying Charlie and his little boat out with it.

Now Charlie seized the oars, and tried manfully to go back. It was all in vain. It is always easier to go on in the wrong direction than to retrace one's steps. He stood up, and shouted; but nobody heard. Away in the distant corn-field, he saw the men leaving their work to go home; but their path did not lead by the shore, and the wind carried his voice from them.

The sun was setting in a glory of golden light. Charlie thought how, perhaps, his mother stood on the porch, watching the piled-up clouds and the lovely colors in the sky; watching, too, for his return from play. And out, out, out, floated the tiny boat to the sea.

Darkness came at last. Ella would be saying her prayers now, thought the poor boy with a sigh; saying her prayers, and getting tucked up in bed, safe at home. And here was he: perhaps by morning he would be so far he could never get back; perhaps drowned.



Charlie did the best thing, then, that a boy could do under such circumstances. He just told God all about it. Kneeling down on the bottom of the boat, he clasped his hands, and prayed. He confessed his sin in disobeying his parents. He asked God to forgive him, and to take him home again. After that, he fell asleep.

God heard his prayer. An hour afterwards, a colored man, going home with oysters and fish, observed the little boat passing his sloop. He saw a dark object curled up in it, and, on looking more closely, discovered that it was a child. Quickly he fastened the boat to his vessel, and, taking Charlie on board, heard all his story.

"If you isn't Massa Charles Elliot's boy!" he exclaimed. "Well, I am glad! I've known your father all my life, an' he's been a good friend to me. I believe the dear Lord sent me home to-night; for I had no idea of going till to-morrow, nohow."

"I am sure he did," said Charlie.

Lights were glancing about in Mr. Elliot's house as they reached it; and, although it was long past midnight, nobody had gone to bed. Cries of joy welcomed the little wanderer home. His mother pressed him eagerly to her heart. His father forgave him for his sin against him; and when he lay in bed by Ella's side, happy and safe, he felt sure that his heavenly Father, too, had pardoned him.



Do you see how he came to fall into danger? It was because, little by little, he played with the tempter, and heeded not the voice of conscience. Beware of little steps toward evil. M. E. M.

For the Child at Home.

THE FROST.

"There is frost on the ground, on the tender grass,
On the leaves of the maple-tree,
White frost on the great round world, mamma,
As far as my eyes can see.

"Will nothing scare it away, mamma,
This glittering, cruel frost?
For the dear little seeds are buried fast,
And I fear they will be lost."

"There's nothing lost, my darling, here.
God's hand is over all:
He watches o'er each hidden seed,
And o'er the leaves that fall.

"The glittering frost will melt away
Before the sun's warm beams;
And you shall see full soon, my boy,
How bright the wide world seems.

"But, little Willie, listen now:
There is a frost that comes,
Not only in the world out there,
But in our happy homes.

"It nips each tender bud of grace
When it has crept within;
For evil thought spreads far and wide,
And brings this frost of sin."

"O mother!" Willie cried, with grief
Dimming his soft blue eyes,
"Is there no sun to melt this frost
Before the good all dies?"

"Yes, dear: the Sun of Righteousness
Will surely rise and shine—
If only you will watch and pray—
Within that heart of thine."

For the Child at Home.

RECONCILED TO GOD.

Dear children, did you ever get affronted with a playmate? You disagreed, perhaps, about some game or toy, and said unkind words that hurt each other's feelings; and so you became estranged one from the other. You no longer took pleasure in being together, and even felt uncomfortably whenever you chanced to meet.

While you were in this state, were you happy? No, indeed, let me answer for you. You talked and laughed with others, it may be, louder than ever, and seemed cheerful, and tried in this way to convince yourself and your playmates that you cared nothing about what had happened; but, all the while, you were uneasy, and inwardly wretched.

Now, suppose at this moment another companion should come along, and, knowing just how things were between you two, should go first to one, and then to the other, and try to "make it up," as you say, between you, and at last, by kind persuasions, and by making you feel that your conduct was wrong, should succeed in the effort, and make you friends again. You would then be "reconciled" to your playmate. And how would you feel? Any more comfortable? any more peaceful? any more happy? I need not answer: you know well enough.

Dear children, did you ever think that we were, in just this way, estranged from God? Not that he has ever offended or wronged us. Oh, no! but we have offended and wronged him, until we are ashamed to look in his face, are uncomfortable in his presence, and want to get as far away from him as possible. Indeed, we are born in this condition. The Bible says in one place that the wicked are estranged from God from their birth; and in another, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh can not please God." That means, that, until we have new hearts, we can not truly please him. In another place it describes this condition still more plainly by saying that we are "enemies by wicked works." It is our sins that have made us enemies to God, and estranged us from him; and it is this position that makes the sinner so restless and miserable.

As we have already agreed, you are very unhappy when at enmity with a companion. Though you may have every thing around you that could minister to your pleasure, yet this single circumstance can poison and destroy it all. Still more is this true, as some of you doubtless know also, if the enmity or estrangement is between you and your father or mother. How unhappy is the naughty child who resists the will of a good, just parent! He is filled with misery, and can never be relieved until he submits and is "reconciled."

So with us sinners. We are rebels against a holy God, a good God, a God who loves us tenderly, cares for us constantly, and longs to have us love him; and, as long as we continue so, we can not please God, and consequently must fail to find any true happiness. How necessary it is, then, that we should, to use the children's phrase, "make up" with him, or, in the language of the Bible, be "reconciled" to him!

How can we, do you ask? Through Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator between God and man, the great Peace-Maker, the loving Reconciler. He says to his Father, "I know your children have offended and grieved you by their disobedience, their ingratitude and sins. But look in mercy upon them for my sake. I will go down to earth, and suffer the punishment they deserve in their stead, so that you can forgive them."

And he came and died,—died that he might "reconcile" the world unto God.

Now he turns to us sinners, and says, "You see what I have done. My Father is satisfied, and will

Cllo Stanley.

